

LAND-USE, PERMITTING & CODE ENFORCEMENT

Status Quo—Staying Unincorporated

Land use regulations and policies in the North Highline communities are established by the King County Council in the King County Comprehensive Plan and King County Code. Land use and zoning determine how specific parcels of land can be used (commercial, residential, etc...), regulate the intensity at which a parcel can be developed for that use (8 homes per acre), and establish rules for development (i.e. setback from street, building height). The dominant land use in North Highline is residential, however the downtown White Center area is a thriving commercial center for this community. King County has no plans for any community planning efforts in this area at this time.

The Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) is a King County agency that issues building and land use permits for properties located in unincorporated King County. DDES also enforces county land use and building codes and includes the King County Fire Marshal's Office. The DDES Permit Center is located in Renton at 900 Oakesdale Avenue SW.

Points to Consider

- The primary concern about land development for many residents is how much time it will take and what it costs to get a permit. The complexity of a project and the amount of environmental constraints on a site play a major role in determining the length of time needed for permit review. While some cities subsidize the activities of their development departments with general fund dollars, King County requires permit applicants to pay for the cost of permit review. Therefore, permit fees are often higher in King County than in cities.
- As the Seattle-metropolitan region continues to grow in population, land and home values in surrounding communities will increase leading to greater development interest. How will potential annexing cities work with residents to ensure development occurs in a way that enriches the community and preserves the unique characteristics of its neighborhoods?
- Where (what location) will residents go to apply for and receive permits? Do jurisdictions provide on-line services?